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Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-12 SOE-02 AF-10 CIAE-00
DODE-00 EA-10 EUR-12 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 IO-13
L-03 NASA-01 NEA-10 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OIC-02 SP-02
PA-01 DOE-15 CEQ-01 OES-09 SS-15 ICA-11 SIG-03
MMO-01 /169 R

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P 071345Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171332

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, XM

SUBJECT: MEXICO CIRCULATES CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 161443

1. SUMMARY. MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE INFORMED US PRIVATELY THEY HAVE INSTRUCTED THEIR AMBASSADORS IN ALL LATIN AMERICAN POSTS, APPARENTLY INCLUDING CUBA, TO PROPOSE A MEETING "AT THE APPROPRIATE POLITICAL LEVEL", PROBABLY IN AUGUST, TO DISCUSS CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT. ALTHOUGH THE MEXICAN INITIATIVE'S SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP
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TO VENEZUELA'S EFFORTS WITH AYACUCHO COUNTRIES IS UNCLEAR, VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, AND JAMAICA HAVE GIVEN VARYING DEGREES OF SUPPORT TO THE IDEA. REPORTING IS REQUESTED ON ANY HOST GOVERNMENT REACTION TO MEXICAN PROPOSAL THAT MAY COME TO EMBASSIES' ATTENTION WITHOUT INITIATING DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY

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2. ON JUNE 23 MEXICAN FOREIGN MINISTER ROEL CIRCULATED INFORMALLY TO THE OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS ATTENDING OASGA A DETAILED DRAFT RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING "CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION" OF FONMINS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN TO STUDY AND REPORT ON SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR ARMS RESTRAINT. THE MEASURES WERE TO INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED

TO (A) ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INVENTORY OF ALL MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS PRESENTLY IN LATIN AMERICA AND A REGISTER OF ALL FUTURE ACQUISITIONS; (B) ESTABLISHMENT OF MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE OF GNP THAT COULD BE DEVOTED TO MILITARY EXPENDITURES; (C) CREATION OF A REGIONAL BODY TO SET AND PERIODICALLY RE-EXAMINE LIMITATIONS OR PROHIBITIONS ON ACQUISITION OF ARMS; AND (D) MEASURES TO PROHIBIT WITHIN THE REGION ARMS "WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED EXCESSIVELY HARMFUL OR WITH INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS." AFTER COMMISSION MADE ITS REPORT, IT WOULD CALL FOR A CONFERENCE WITH ALL IMPORTANT SUPPLIERS OF ARMS TO LATIN AMERICA TO NEGOTIATE THE RESTRAINT MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION. THE MEXICAN DRAFT, CLEARLY INTENDED BY ITS DRAFTERS AS A CONVENTIONAL PARALLEL TO TLATELOLCO, WAS CAREFULLY WORDED SO THAT COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS WOULD BE OUTSIDE THE OAS.

3. IN LIGHT OF STRONG VENEZUELAN REACTION, SECONDED PRIVATELY BY THE US, THAT GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF RESOLUTION CONFIDENTIAL

WAS HIGHLY DESIRABLE BUT THAT ENUMERATION OF SPECIFICS WENT TOO FAR TOO SOON AND MIGHT ALIENATE OTHER COUNTRIES, MEXICANS NEGOTIATED A REVISED DRAFT WITH VENEZUELANS AND CIRCULATED IT INFORMALLY JUNE 24 AS JOINT MEXICAN-VENEZUELAN RESOLUTION. THIS VERSION WHICH AT VENEZUELAN SUGGESTION WAS MEANT TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE OASGA, RETAINED SPECIFIC MEASURES LISTED ABOVE, BUT INSTEAD OF CREATING COMMISSION OF FONMINS TO APPROVE THEM, CALLED UPON "ALL COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN TO PREPARE STUDIES, SUGGESTIONS AND PROPOSALS CONCERNING THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION, INCLUDING AN OPINION ON THE DESIRABILITY OF (THE MEXICAN PROPOSALS), AMONG OTHER MEASURES". THE REVISED DRAFT PROPOSED A FONMINS MEETING "NOT LATER THAN 1979...WITH THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING CONCRETE MEASURES ON THIS SUBJECT, PREPARATIONS FOR WHICH WILL BE MADE IN CONSULTATIONS AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL AMONG THE INTERESTED COUNTRIES." THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE OF RECIPIENTS AND SUPPLIERS WAS ALSO RETAINED.

4. THE US DELEGATION INFORMED THE MEXICANS AND VENEZUELANS THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RESOLUTION IN THE GA EVEN THOUGH THE

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US WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED AS A PARTICIPANT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, ALMOST EVERY OTHER DELEGATION CONTACTED BY MEXICO AND VENEZUELA SAID THEY COULD NOT TAKE A POSITION ON A TOTALLY NEW AGENDA ITEM WITHOUT REFERRING BACK TO CAPITALS FOR INSTRUCTIONS. THE CO-SPONSORS THEREFORE DECIDED NOT TO INTRODUCE THEIR DRAFT FORMALLY AT THIS OASGA.

5. NOT WISHING TO BE STYMIED BY THE SLOW-REACTING OAS DELS, AND PREFERRING IN ANY CASE THE WIDER SCOPE WITH REGARD TO FREEDOM OF ACTION OUTSIDE THE OAS, MEXICO JUNE 27 AND 28 SIMULTANEOUSLY INSTRUCTED ALL OF ITS AMBASSADORS IN LATIN AMERICA TO COMMUNICATE TO THEIR HOST GOVERNMENTS THE TEXTS OF BOTH ITS ORIGINAL PROPOSAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE REVISED VERSION AND TO SEEK AGREEMENT TO ATTEND A MEETING SOMETIME IN AUGUST "AT THE APPROPRIATE POLITICAL LEVEL" TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS. GOM APPARENTLY INTENDS HOST MEETING IN MEXICO, BUT, LIKE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE HAMMERED OUT DURING SSOD AND OASGA MEETINGS, TIMING MAY SLIP. MEETING COULD COINCIDE WITH PREPARATION FOR 1979 UNCAT SCHEDULED FOR GENEVA IN LATE AUGUST. MEXICAN OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THEY SEE THEIR PROPOSAL AS NOT IN CONTRADICTION BUT IN HARMONY WITH EFFORTS OF VENEZUELA, WHICH AS STATED REFTEL HAD PLANNED HOST MEETING OF AYACUCHO FONMINS IN CARACAS THIS SUMMER OR FALL. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER VENEZUELA TAKES SAME VIEW, OR WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PARTICIPATE IN MEXICAN-SPONSORED MEETING.

6. BEFORE GA ADJOURNED, FAVORABLE RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED FROM COSTA RICA AND ECUADOR, AND ON JULY 1 ALL OASGA DELS WERE GIVEN A PAPER LABELLED "INFORMATION DOCUMENT" AND TITLED, "INITIATIVE OF GOVERNMENTS OF COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, MEXICO, AND VENEZUELA ON LIMITATION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMAMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA." TEXT IS IDENTICAL WITH REVISED MEXICAN-VENEZUELAN DRAFT EXCEPT FOR ONE MINOR EDITORIAL CHANGE. GOM TELLS US JAMAICA ALSO RESPONDED POSITIVELY, PRESUMABLY TOO LATE FOR IT TO BE LISTED AS CO-SPONSOR. BRAZIL AND URUGUAY REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED SERIOUS RESERVATIONS INFORMALLY AT THE GA, SAYING ARMS PURCHASES WERE INTERNAL AFFAIR OF EACH COUNTRY. MOST OTHER COUNTRIES PRESUMABLY HAVE NOT YET RESPONDED.

7. ACTION REQUESTED. POSTS (EXCEPT MEXICO AND CARACAS) SHOULD NOT RPT NOT INITIATE DISCUSSION OF MEXICAN-VENEZUE-LAN DRAFT. FOREGOING ACCOUNT OF MEXICAN PLANS AND BEHIND-THE SCENES MANEUVERING GENERALLY, EXCEPT FOR NATURE OF DOCUMENT OPENLY CIRCULATED JULY 1 AT OAS, SHOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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REGARDED AS STRICTLY FYI. IF ARMS RESTRAINT ISSUES ARE RAISED BY OTHERS, HOWEVER, YOU MAY SAY THAT WE ARE ON RECORD AS FAVORING ANY RESPONSIBLE LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVE FOR ARMS RESTRAINT. YOU MAY CONFIRM THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED RESTRAINT PROPOSALS, INCLUDING OUR OWN POLICIES, WITH BOTH MEXICO AND VENEZUELA AT THEIR INITIATIVE, AND THAT WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO DO THE SAME WITH OTHER LATIN GOVERNMENTS. BUT THIS SHOULD REMAIN A LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVE. WE EXPECT THE EXACT NATURE OF PROPOSALS TO BE WORKED OUT AMONG LATINS THEMSELVES. BECAUSE OF THE OBVIOUS

POSSIBILITY OF RIVALRY AND DUPLICATION OF EFFORT BETWEEN MEXICO AND VENEZUELA, WE WANT TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO GET CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, AND SHOULD IN ANY CONVERSATION SAY THAT US STRONGLY FAVORS CLOSE COOPERATION, COORDINATION, AND TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE COMBINATION, OF EFFORTS AMONG ALL COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN ARMS RESTRAINT. PLEASE REPORT ANY SIGNIFICANT CONVERSATION, PUBLIC STATEMENT, OR OTHER DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THIS SUBJECT THAT MAY COME TO YOUR ATTENTION.

8. FOR CARACAS. AT YOUR DISCRETION, PLEASE SEEK EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE DEVELOPMENTS (INCLUDING FYI PORTION) WITH GOV AND OBTAIN THEIR ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION. HOW DOES GOV SEE ITS PLANS RELATING TO MEXICAN PLANS? DOES MENTION OF 1979 FONMINS MEETING IN REVISED JOINT DRAFT WITH MEXICANS INDICATE INTENTION TO POSTPONE AYACUCHO MEETING GOV WAS CONSIDERING FOR THIS FALL? OR DOES IT MERELY POSTPONE POLITICAL FRUITION OF MEXICAN INITIATIVE UNTIL AFTER AYACUCHO GETS WELL UNDERWAY? DOES VENEZUELA PLAN ATTEND MEXICAN EXPLORATORY MEETING (WHICH WE BELIEVE LIKELY TO BE HELD REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE)? VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE171332
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: GFJONES:BJF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780279-0377
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780785/aaaactmr.tel
Line Count: 206
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60526479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 161443
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2084971
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEXICO CIRCULATES CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT INITIATIVE
TAGS: PARM, XM
To: ALL POSTS
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60526479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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